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TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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PLEASE PASS TO R. WILLIAMSON ATTENDING OPANAL MEETING

FOLLOWING REPEAT BUENOS AIRES 02707 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
BONN

BRASILIA MEXICO OTTAWA SANTIAGO EC BRUSSELS IAEA VIENNA
ERDA HQ WASH DC ERDA HQ GERMANTOWN APR 14, 1977

QTE S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 2707

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, MNVC, PFOR, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINE CNEA REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S NUCLEAR
POLICY STATEMENT

REF: STATE 78034

1. SUMMARY. THE PRESIDENT OF THE ARGENTINE CNEA VIEWS
SUBJECT STATEMENT AS ENHANCING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF
NATURAL URANIUM-HEAVY WATER POWER REACTORS. HE IS
INTERESTED IN COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. ON HEAVY

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WATER AND INTERESTED IN OUR REACTION TO ARGENTINA'S
PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT PROJECT. CASTRO MADERO HAS
STRESSED A LACK OF INTEREST IN BUILDING A BOMB, ALTHOUGH
INDICATING ARGENTINA WOULD IF BRAZIL DID. NPT ADHERENCE
WOULD BE A POSSIBILITY, IF BRAZIL AND CHILE JOINED
ARGENTINA IN SO DOING. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT AN
EFFECT OF THE NEW U.S. POLICY WILL BE SEEN AS MAINTAINING

ARGENTINA AND LATAM IN GENERAL IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED STATUS.
END SUMMARY.

2. PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT BY
S&T COUNSELOR TO CNEA PRESIDENT CASTRO MADERO LED
TO HALF HOUR GENERAL EXCHANGE ON NUCLEAR POLICY,
NONPROLIFERATION, ETC. CASTRO MADERO HAD SEEN
PRESS VERSIONS OF CARTER STATEMENT, BUT EXPRESSED
GRATITUDE AT RECEIVING THE "AS DELIVERED" VERSION.

3. CASTRO MADERO OBSERVED THAT ARGENTINE NUCLEAR
PLAN REQUIRES NEITHER ENRICHMENT NOR REPROCESSING,
HENCE THESE DECISIONS OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION PRODUCE
ONLY MINOR EFFECTS HERE. HE ALSO NOTED, NOT SUR-
PRISINGLY, THAT U.S. DECISION NOT TO REPROCESS APPEARS
TO MAKE THE NATURAL URANIUM, HEAVY WATER POWER
REACTOR ALL THE MORE ATTRACTIVE AS COMPARED TO LWR'S,
THUS REINFORCING ARGENTINA'S EARLIER DECISION TO GO
THIS ROUTE.

4. OF MORE URGENCY TO HIM, CASTRO MADERO SAID, WOULD
BE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD COOPERATION IN NON-EMBARGOED
AREAS. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN OUR
COLLABORATION IN HEAVY WATER, NOTING THAT HEAVY
WATER WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE ARGENTINE PLAN AND THAT
RESTRICTIONS ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN THIS AREA WERE
LESS UNDERSTANDABLE, I.E., ONE STILL NEEDED A
REPROCESSING PLANT TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM, EVEN
IF ONE BUILT A NATURAL URANIUM-HEAVY WATER REACTOR.

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WE WERE NON-COMMITTAL ON THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCH
COLLABORATION, NOTING ONLY THAT (A) HE WAS, OF COURSE,
CORRECT FROM A TECHNICAL STANDPOINT; (B) IT MIGHT
DEPEND SOMEWHAT ON ONE'S PERCEPTION OF SAFEGUARDS;
(C) THE PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT PER SE DID NOT
EMBARGO SUCH COOPERATION.

5. CASTRO MADERO ASKED WHAT U.S. ATTITUDE WOULD BE
TOWARD ARGENTINA'S PLANNED PILOT REPROCESSING
PLANT, WHICH HE INDICATED WAS INTENDED TO HANDLE
RA-3 RESEARCH REACTOR FUEL OF U.S. ORIGIN. WE NOTED
THAT THERE WAS A PROVISION IN THE U.S.- ARGENTINA
NUCLEAR BILATERAL AGREEMENT CONCERNING THIS, BUT
WERE WERE OTHERWISE NON-COMMITTAL. (NOTE: CNEA IS
NOW, IF THEY WERE NOT BEFORE, FAMILIAR WITH ERDA
PART 810 AS WELL. AT CNEA REQUEST, WE SENT THEM
A COPY LAST WEEK.)

6. CASTRO MADERO STATED RATHER CLEARLY THAT ARGENTINA

HAD NO INTENTION OF BUILDING THE BOMB AND THAT HE THOUGHT EVERYBODY WOULD KNOW IT WITHIN THREE DAYS IF IT EVER STARTED OUT TO. AS BOMB TECHNOLOGY WAS DEVELOPED 30 YEARS AGO, HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT ARGENTINA COULD BUILD ONE IF IT HAD TO. FURTHER, IF BRAZIL BUILT ONE, EVERYBODY KNEW THAT ARGENTINA WOULD ALSO, AND VICE VERSA. THEREFORE, THERE WAS NO POINT IN EITHER ONE OF THEM DOING IT.

7. RE THE NPT, CASTRO MADERO SAID HE FELT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO REBUILD THE COUNTRY AND WAS IN A WEAK POSITION DOMESTICALLY TO DEFEND SUCH AN ACTION. NONETHELESS, HE INDICATED THAT ADHERENCE WAS POSSIBLE IF ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, AND CHILE WOULD TAKE SUCH A STEP TOGETHER (COMMENT: THE CHIEF HOLDOUT AT PRESENT WOULD THEREFORE APPEAR TO BE BRAZIL, WHICH REITERATED IN ITS RECENT WHITE SECRET

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PAPER ITS INTENTION NOT TO ADHERE.)

8. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THIS WAS PROBABLY NOT PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTENT, CASTRO MADERO FEELS AN EFFECT OF THIS NEW POLICY WILL BE TO HELP MAINTAIN ARGENTINA AND LATAM IN GENERAL IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED STATE. THUS, THE BOX ARGENTINA IS IN NUCLEAR-WISE PREVENTS HIM FROM MAKING EFFECTIVE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. HE MENTIONED THE CANADIAN DEMAND TO ADHERE TO NPT OR ACCEPT FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS AND EXPRESSED A CERTAIN RESENTMENT TO THE EVER-INCREASING SAFEGUARDS DEMANDS OF THE TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT, TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED THESE OF PRESIDENT CARTER. HE SAID THAT IT SEEMED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER FELT LATIN AMERICA TO BE OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE. WE REFUTED THIS, AND SAID THAT WE THOUGHT STATEMENTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD PROVE THE CONTRARY. CASTRO MADERO NOTED THAT UNDER-DEVELOPMENT OF ARGENTINA (AND FRUSTRATION OF ITS DEVELOPMENT PLANS) COULD WELL LEAD TO A RENEWED FOOTHOLD FOR COMMUNIST AND ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING HERE, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUTH. TO SOME EXTENT, IT MAY ALSO LEAD TO CHARGES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA THAT THE "HAVES" WISH TO KEEP THE "HAVE NOTS" IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED STATUS.

9. WE URGED CASTRO MADERO TO WORK TOWARD NPT ADHERENCE BY ARGENTINE, BRAZIL, AND CHILE. WE ALSO EMPHASIZED OUR CONVICTION THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WERE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, ESPECIALLY REDUCTION OF THE U.S. AND SOVIET STOCKPILES, AND ALSO ABOUT NON-

PROLIFERATION.

10. COMMENT: WE THINK THAT CASTRO MADERO'S REMARKS
PROVIDE A PRETTY GOOD INSIGHT INTO CURRENT GOA
THINKING ON THIS ISSUE. THE INCENTIVES FOR ARGENTINA
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TO ADHERE TO NPT ARE HIGH, AND IT REMAINS FOR SOME
WAY TO BE FOUND TO BRING BRAZIL AROUND FOR
THIS RESULT TO BE ACHIEVABLE.
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